

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVES WIN IN AICHI AND KITAKYUSHU

REF: TOKYO 1390

1. SUMMARY. ON FEBRUARY 9, CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES WON BOTH AICHI PREFECTURE GUBERNATORIAL AND KITYAKYUSHU MAYORAL ELECTIONS. VICTORIES HAVE STIMULATED LDP OPTIMISM CONCERNING PROSPECTS IN FUTURE ELECTIONS AND GENERATED MUCH SPECULATION THAT NEXT GENERAL ELECTION COULD COME AS EARLY AS JULY. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEBRUARY 9, LDP-DSP CANDIDATE YOSHIKI NAKAYA (49) ROUNDLY DEFEATED BANJI NARUSE (JSP-JCP-KOMEITO) IN AICHI PREFECTURE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION. NAKAYA SWAMPED OPPONENT BY MARGIN OF 1,449,260 VOTES TO 1,065,030. FORMER VICE GOVERNOR, NAKAYA WAS HAND-PICKED SUCCESSOR TO MIKINE KUWAHARA WHO HAD DOMINATED AICHI POLITICAL SCENE AS GOVERNOR FOR 24 YEARS. WINNER WAS CLEARLY HELPED BY IDENTIFICATION WITH POPULAR PREDECESSOR, BY BETTER THAN EXPECTED DSP-DOMEI CAMPAIGN EFFORT, AND BY NOT UNFAMILIAR DIVISION AMONG OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES.

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3. POLITICAL OBSERVERS, NOTING THAT MAIN AICHI CITY OF NAGOYA HAD ELECTED REFORMIST MAYOR 2 YEARS AGO, HAD PREDICTED THAT GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION WOULD BE CLOSE ONE. THEY ALSO BELIEVED THAT ELECTION OUTCOME WOULD BE BETTER INDICATOR OF THINGS TO COME IN APRIL UNIFIED LOCAL ELECTIONS THAN HAD BEEN RESULTS OF SIX EARLIER GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS (REFTEL). CONSEQUENTLY, CONSERVATIVES WERE ESPECIALLY PLEASED WITH DECISIVE NATURE OF NAKAYA'S VICTORY AS WELL AS WITH FACT THAT IT GAVE THEM CLEAN SWEEP OF GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS HELD SO FAR THIS YEAR. MOREOVER, DESPITE STRING OF LOCAL REFORMIST WINS ALONG PACIFIC COAST IN RECENT YEARS, AICHI OUTCOME DEMONSTRATED THAT CONSERVATIVES STILL CAN WIN IN MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS.

4. WHILE NAKAYA WAS WINNING IN AICHI, CONSERVATIVES SCORED ANOTHER IMPORTANT WIN ON SAME DAY WHEN INCUMBENT MAYOR GOHEI TANI (LDP-DSP) DEFEATED SHICHIRO MATSUMOTO (JSP-JCP) AND KIYOSHI KAJI (KOMEITO) IN KITAKYUSHU MAYORAL ELECTION. KIYAKYUSHU IS LARGEST CITY IN KYUSHU. REFLECTING INTENSE CAMPAIGNING BY PARITES AND HIGH VOTER INTEREST, VOTER TURNOUT WAS RECORD-SETTING 76 PERCENT. FINAL RESULTS ARE NOT YET IN, BUT PROJECTIONS INDICATE THAT

TANI WON BY SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN. OUR CONSUL IN FUKUOKA TELLS US THAT TANI WAS POPULAR MAYOR WHO HAD DONE MUCH FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AND, ON OTHER HAND, THAT ONCE AGAIN JSP AND JCP DID NOT WORK TOGETHER VERY EFFECTIVELY.

5. COMMENT: ALREADY IN UP-BEAT MOOD BECAUSE OF EARLIER GUBERNATORIAL VICTORIES, LDP MEMBERS HAVE BEEN FURTHER ENCOURED BY SUNDAY WINS IN AICHI AND KYUSHU. WE INCREASINGLY HEAR TALK THAT POLITICAL WIND IS AGAIN BLOWING IN DIRECTION FAVORABLE TO CONSERVATIVES. THAT DOES NOT MEAN SENSE OF "CRISIS" HAS VANISHED - CONSERVATIVES CAN HARDLY FORGET NEAR DISASTER IN UPPER HOUSE ELECTION LAST SUMMER AND TANAKA'S INGLORIOUS EXIT. IT DOES MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT RIGHT NOW THEY THINK THINGS ARE LOOKING BETTER THAN THEY HAVE IN LONG TIME.

6. NOT SURPRISINGLY, AICHI AND KITAKYUSHU VICTORIES HAVE STIMULATED INCREASED SPECULATION THAT PRIME MINISTER MIKI AND LDP LEADERS WILL SEEK TO CAPITALIZE ON UPTURN IN PARTY SUPPORT AND PRIME MINISTER'S STILL FAVORABLE PUBLIC IMAGE BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CALLING GENERAL ELECTION AS EARLY AS JULY RATHER THAN WAITING UNTIL AUTUMN AS HAD BEEN EARLIER EXPECTED. MIKI, AGAIN YESTERDAY, HAS PUBLICLY DENIED PLANS FOR EARLY DISSOLUTION OF DIET AND LDP STILL HAS MANY DOUBTERS ABOUT WISDOM OF EARLY GENERAL ELECTION. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA ECHOED CONSERVATIVE VIEWS WITHIN PARTY FEB 10, WHEN HE TOLD AMBASSADOR HE FEELS MIKI MUST TACKLE MANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS (INFLATION, CONTROL OF POLITICAL

FUNDS, ETC) OVER NEXT QTE YEAR OR SO UNQTE, AND GO TO
PEOPLE ON BASIS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION'S ACHIEVEMENTS. HE,
THEREFORE, TENDED TO DOWNPLAY CHANCES OF EARLY ELECTIONS.
DECISION ABOUT ELECTION IS STILL PROBABLY SOME TIME OFF AND WILL
DEPEND ON RESULTS OF APRIL LOCAL ELECTIONS, AS WELL AS PROGRESS
AGAINST CURRENT NATIONAL PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, AS WE MOVE TOWARD A
TIME OF DECISION LATER THIS SPRING, UP-BEAT FEELINGS
BROUGHT BY INTERIM ELECTORAL SUCCESSES SEEM TO US TO INCREASE
CHANCES OF EARLY ELECTION.
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